



Rural Matters

The Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs

Lt. Governor Skillman Announces \$16 Million Award to Expand Telemedicine Services Across Indiana

"Indiana's access to technology plays an important role in improving healthcare in our rural communities. Many clinics in our small cities are without access to broadband networks. They will greatly benefit from this advanced technology, which will allow them to connect with additional medical experts from around the country."

Lt. Governor Skillman

Lieutenant Governor Becky Skillman and the Indiana Rural Health Association (IRHA) recently announced a \$16,138,270 award for the Indiana Telehealth Network from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). This award, which is part of a \$417 million fund dedicated by the FCC to their Rural Health Care Pilot program, will be used to connect 35 critical access hospitals throughout the state to broadband access. Connecting these health care providers to broadband enables Indiana to take a major step forward in improving rural broadband infrastructure and telehealth capacity.

Thousands of Hoosiers will benefit from the technology upgrade made possible from this award. The project will address unmet health needs by providing rural patients with improved access to care. It will provide a venue that will support health information exchange and increased participation of health care providers through the implementation of a dedicated, broadband health network. The network will also serve the community as a valuable resource for public health emergencies and disaster preparedness.



Indiana HomeTown Competitiveness Training

Nine communities from across Indiana recently attended a training in Indianapolis for the pilot launch of the Indiana HomeTown Competitiveness program. Teams of five individuals from the Town of Alexandria, Decatur County, the Town of Ferdinand, Greene County, Henry County, Lawrence County, Washington County, White County, and the Town of Oxford were selected to participate in the training, which was held February 19 – 22.



A team meets to discuss the four HTC pillars.

Community team members learned about the four pillars of HTC and methods to promote each pillar (Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

Leading Indiana	2
Artisan Trail	2
Joint Land Use Study	3
RCG Forum	3
GA Training	4
CDBG Information	5
HS Students Honored	6

HTC Training (Continued from page 1)

in their hometowns. The four pillars of HTC include: entrepreneurship, charitable asset development, youth engagement, and leadership development.

Indiana HomeTown Competitiveness is a partnership of statewide resource providers including the Office of Community and Rural Affairs, Ball State's Building Better Communities, USDA Rural Development, Purdue Center for Regional Development, Indiana Grantmakers Alliance, and the Indiana Rural Development Council. The statewide resource team will meet with each pilot community over the next four months to assess their strengths and develop next steps toward creating stronger and more vibrant communities.

"Leading Indiana to New Horizons" Day of Learning



The "Leading Indiana to New Horizons" Day of Learning was held February 5 at the Hendricks County Fairgrounds in Danville, Indiana. OCRA supported the Indiana Leadership Association in sponsoring this event.

The seminar focused on asset-based community development in action. Community development professionals enjoyed the opportunity to focus their efforts on discovering and capitalizing on resources that are already present in their communities.

Facilitator Mike Green, (pictured at left) a twenty year community organizer and trainer, led the workshop.

Indiana Artisan Development Project

Lt. Governor Becky Skillman recently announced the launch of the Indiana Artisan Development Project (IADP), which will support and promote Hoosier artisans and handmade products. The project is a joint venture between the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA), the Indiana Office of Tourism Development, the Indiana State Department of Agriculture, and the Indiana Arts Commission.

The goals of the Indiana Artisan Development Project include: raising awareness about the availability of hand-crafted and value-added food products made in Indiana; providing artisans, particularly those in rural areas, with access to entrepreneurial support; providing grant funding for artisan business development education and networking; promoting artisan trail development and retail opportunities; and developing branding for Indiana-made goods. Program initiatives are aimed at attracting in- and out-of-state visitors to individual artisan sites and arts-concentrated areas in Indiana.

Artisans interested in learning more about the project should contact Eric Freeman, Artisan Development Project Manager, at 317.607.8715 or artisan@iac.IN.gov.

State Receives \$164,250 Grant to Research Relationship Between Military Installations, Surrounding Communities

OCRA recently received a \$164,250 federal grant from the Office of Economic Adjustment within the U.S. Department of Defense to fund a joint land use study in partnership with the Indiana Office of Energy and Defense Development, Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center (CAJMTC), Muscatatuck Urban Training Center (MUTC), and surrounding communities including the City of Columbus, Town of Edinburgh, Town of North Vernon, the Cordry/Sweetwater Lake Conservancy, Prince's Lakes, and Bartholomew, Brown, Jackson, Jennings, and Johnson counties.

A team is currently being assembled to conduct the joint land use study, which will assess the relationship between the area's economic development and planned expansion of the military installations and additional installation exercises. CAJMTC, MUTC, and the surrounding communities are collaborating on this study in order to assess and address the current and future needs of the study area. OCRA will offer support and technical assistance to partnering communities.

"Strategic economic planning is essential to the well-being of Indiana's rural communities," said David Terrell, Executive Director of OCRA. "Receiving funding for this project provides partnering communities with important decision-making tools that will positively impact their future."

OCRA contributed five percent of the required ten percent local match necessary for the grant program. Partnering communities contributed the additional local matching funds.

Rural Capacity Grant Forum

The Office of Community and Rural Affairs will host the first-ever Rural Capacity Grant (RCG) Forum on March 14, 2008 in Indiana Government Center South, Conference Room B in downtown Indianapolis. Registration begins at 9:00 a.m. and the program begins at 10:00 a.m. This one-day event will focus on bringing together current rural capacity grantees, previous applicants, and future applicants to learn about promising practices, successful projects, and difficult lessons learned from the first round of RCG projects.

This forum is an exciting opportunity for interested communities to network with other grantees and applicants, learn about successful projects, and preview the new non-competitive application process!

Register for this *free* event by contacting Kristin Bunch at krbunch@ocra.IN.gov or calling toll-free, 1-800-824-2476.

When: March 14 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Where: Government Center South, Conference Room B

Registration Fee: FREE

2008 Grant Administrator Certification Courses

Rural communities depend on grant administrators to facilitate interaction with state government. The grant administrator becomes the driving force behind change in these communities and will see the long-term benefits of their services through recognition and project success. Because of the high-impact role the grant administrator plays, this training and certification course is offered to equip grant administrators in effectively carrying out their duties.

Below are the dates for the 2008 courses. Please be aware that these courses have been filling up quickly. Registration forms can be found on OCRA's Web site at: http://www.in.gov/ocra/grant_training.shtml. **Please remember**, the fall certification course will be four (4) consecutive days this year. Grant administrators who are due to expire in the spring, but would like to attend the fall course over consecutive days, should request an extension from OCRA by April 30. Grant administrators who are due to expire in fall 2008, but would like to take the course on consecutive Wednesdays, **MUST** register for the spring 2008 course. Please contact the Office of Community and Rural Affairs at (317) 232-8333 with any questions.

Spring 2008

TEST-OUT **FEE: \$25.00**

Wednesday, February 27, 2008
12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

(The test-out is for those who have previously been certified and would like to renew their certification. Re-certification is required every two years.)

TRAINING **FEE: \$100.00**

Wednesday, April 9, 2008
Wednesday, April 16, 2008
Wednesday, April 23, 2008
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. each day

Wednesday, April 30, 2008
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Fall 2008

TEST-OUT **FEE: \$25.00**

Wednesday, September 10, 2008
12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

(The test-out is for those who have previously been certified and would like to renew their certification. Re-certification is required every two years.)

TRAINING **FEE: \$100.00**

Tuesday, October 14, 2008
Wednesday, October 15, 2008
Thursday, October 16, 2008
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. each day

Friday, October 17, 2008
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

For more information about registration, please contact Lisa Garner, Program Manager of Building Better Communities at (765) 285-1665 or lgarner@bsu.edu.

Both grant administrator training sessions will be held at:
The Garrison at Fort Benjamin Harrison State Park
6002 North Post Road, Indianapolis, IN 46216

2008 CDBG Dates

March

- 14 - CFF Round I Applications Due
5:00 p.m.
One North Capitol, 6th Floor

April

- 9 - Grant Administrator Training
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Ft. Benjamin Harrison
- 16 - Grant Administrator Training
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Ft. Benjamin Harrison
- 23 - Grant Administrator Training
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Ft. Benjamin Harrison
- 30 - Grant Administrator Training
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Ft. Benjamin Harrison

May

- 16 - CFF Round I Awards Announced

June

- TBD - CFF Round I Awards Ceremony
Indiana Statehouse

July

- 11 - CFF Round II Proposals Due
5:00 p.m.
One North Capitol, 6th Floor

September

- 10 - Grant Administrator Test-Out
12:00 p.m.
Ft. Benjamin Harrison
- 14 - CFF Round I Applications Due
5:00 p.m.
One North Capitol, 6th Floor

October

- 14 - Grant Administrator Training
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Ft. Benjamin Harrison
- 15 - Grant Administrator Training
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Ft. Benjamin Harrison
- 16 - Grant Administrator Training
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Ft. Benjamin Harrison
- 17 - Grant Administrator Training
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Ft. Benjamin Harrison

November

- 14 - CFF Round II Awards Announced

December

- TBD - CFF Round II Awards Ceremony
Indiana Statehouse

Policy Change Regarding Time Extensions

Time extensions for Community Focus Fund grants and planning grants have become excessive. Planning grants are awarded for a 12 month period and Community Focus Fund grants are awarded for an 18 month period. Acceptance of these CDBG Grants constitutes acceptance of all deadlines outlined in the grant agreement.

Time extensions WILL NOT automatically be approved for any reason effective February 1, 2008. All modification requests, including time extensions will require either 1) an in-person meeting with OCRA staff which is attended by the grantee, grant administrator, and engineer/architect, or 2) a conference call with the grantee and grant administrator. OCRA will determine which will apply on a case-by-case basis.

CFF Technical Assistance Workshop

A Community Focus Fund (CFF) Technical Assistance Workshop was held on February 25. Check out http://www.in.gov/ocra/community_cdbg.shtml for more information about CFF eligibility. Key points from the workshop included:

- Grant Administrators should verify that income surveys meet CDBG standards;
- Philanthropic match requirements: must equal 2% of total requested amount or \$5,000 (whichever is greater); and
- Sub-recipient agreement requirements: applicants must submit appropriate documentation from sub-recipients.

Click here for PowerPoint slides from the workshop:

http://www.in.gov/ocra/forms/TA%20Workshop_2.25.08_FINAL.ppt

Students Honored for Exemplary Community Service Efforts

Lt. Governor Skillman and the Office of Community and Rural Affairs recently partnered with Indiana State University to honor recipients of the Sycamore Community Leadership Award and the Sycamore Service Awards. These awards recognize Indiana high schools and high school students who have made significant contributions to their communities through community service. Applicants were evaluated based on student leadership, community impact, widespread student involvement, and commitment to using community service as a pathway to learning by a panel of state leaders.



OCRA Executive Director David Terrell is pictured with students from Crawfordsville High School.

David Terrell, Executive Director of OCRA, was on hand to present award certificates to the winners and read a congratulatory letter from Lt. Governor Skillman during an awards ceremony held at the Governor's mansion in late January. Winners included:



David Terrell reads a congratulatory letter from Lt. Governor Skillman.

2006-2007 Sycamore Community Leadership Award:

- Crawfordsville High School.
- Honorable Mentions: Bloomington High School South, Connersville High School, Owen Valley High School, Roncalli High School, and West Vigo High School.

2006-2007 Sycamore Service Scholars:

- Jessika Budd (West Vigo High School);
- Kelly Loman (Roncalli High School);
- Jessika Newton (Connersville High School); and
- Brittany Ooley (Owen Valley High School).

Indiana's Food for the Hungry ONLINE

More than 25 million Americans rely on food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and other emergency feeding programs. That represents one in every ten people in the country. The Indiana Food Assistance Organization Directory is a great resource for Hoosier communities. The directory lists food pantries by county with locations, contact information, and hours. The site also includes links to information about food safety and nutrition. The directory can be accessed at:

<http://www.cfs.purdue.edu/safefood/sfhungry.html>

INDIANA MAIN STREET



Save the date! Indiana Main Street is currently preparing for the Cornelius O'Brien Historic Preservation and Indiana Main Street Conference. This year's conference will be held in Bloomington, October 16-18. The conference planning committee is working diligently to secure speakers that will feature topics that are relevant to historic preservation and local Main Street programs.

OCRA Photo Contest

"Rural Indiana is full of beautiful scenery, architecture, and nature. This contest will allow us to celebrate the beauty of our rural areas and share it with our fellow Hoosiers."

-Lt. Governor Skillman

Lt. Governor Becky Skillman and the Office of Community and Rural Affairs recently announced that entries are now being accepted for the "Rural Matters" photo contest, which will highlight the beauty of rural Indiana. Winners will receive recognition from the Lieutenant Governor and have their photographs publicly displayed in the Indiana Statehouse.



Entries are being accepted through March 28, 2008 in seven categories including architecture, business, cities and towns, education, landscape, nature, and recreation. A winner will be chosen for each category, as well as one overall winner. Professional and amateur photographers may submit up to five entries. Official contest rules and an entry form can be found at www.ocra.IN.gov.

Taxes Made Easy with I-File

The Indiana Department of Revenue launched another enhanced version of I-File on Jan. 1, 2008 --- and already more than 5,000 taxpayers have filed their taxes using the state's fast, friendly and free online tool. Since the launch of its newly revamped I-File program in 2006, continued enhancements, driven by taxpayer feedback, have made I-File an easy-to-use service that contributes to better government efficiency. Last year, more than 51 percent of Indiana tax filers used programs like I-File to electronically file their taxes. The state saves 96 cents in processing cost for every tax return that is filed electronically.



www.ifile.in.gov

And taxpayers are finding the newly enhanced I-File tool to their liking. Not only do taxpayers get their refunds in seven to 14 days if filed through programs like I-File, compared with six to 12 weeks with paper filings, but customer surveys in 2006 and 2007 found that more than 96 percent of I-File users were satisfied or very satisfied with the revamped tool -- and 94 percent would recommend it to a friend or family member. The surveys collected input from more than 2,500 taxpayers.